

Four children drown in two districts

METRO DESK

Four children, including two of a family, drowned in Pabna and Gaibandha on Thursday evening and yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Pabna adds: Two children of a family drowned in a pond at Jugipara village in the town on Thursday evening.

The victims are Rahul Hossain, 7, son of Abdul Kuddus and Rohan Hossain, 6, son of Kuddus' brother Abdur Rahman.

The bodies recovered from a pond near the residence at the evening on Thursday.

Family sources said Rahul and Rohan went missing at noon. Later, their bodies were found in the pond near their residence after a hectic search in the evening.

Our Correspondent from Gaibandha adds: Two children drowned in separate incidents in Sadullapur Upazila yesterday.

In an incident, two-year-old Moushumi Sultana, daughter of Mokbul Hossain of Joyenpur village in Sadullapur Upazila drowned in a nearby pond when she fell into it while playing.

In another incident, Moinul Hossain, 5, son of Taffazal Hossain Mia of Burirvita village in Sadullapur Upazila was taking bath in a pond and suddenly met the tragic end in the water.



Green Mind, Krishti Parishad and WBB Trust form a human chain at Azimpur intersection in the city yesterday demanding a rise in taxes on tobacco and its products.

PHOTO: STAR

Death anniversary

STAFF CORRESPONDENT



Today is the 40th death anniversary of martyred intellectual Mohammad Shamsuzzaman, a chief engineer of the Chittagong Port Trust, says a press release.

On this day during the War of Liberation, Pakistan army took him away from his office. His whereabouts cannot be known ever since after he was picked up.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers are requested to pray for salvation of the departed soul.

Nasir Uddin

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Today is the 17th death anniversary of Journalist Mohammad Nasir Uddin, the editor of the Shaoghat and founder of the weekly Begum, says a press release.

On the occasion, a memorial meeting, destitute feeding programme, quarkhwani and milad mahfil will be held at his residence at 38, Sharatgupta Road of Narinda in the city.

Obituary

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Gaibandha

Amjad Hossain Sarker, an employee of Sadullapur Upazila Parishad, passed away at his residence yesterday due to cardiac arrest at the age of 55, says a press release.

He left behind his wife, two sons, two daughters and host of relatives.

His namaz-e-janaza was held after Juma prayers and buried at his family graveyard.

Qulkhwani of Rawshan Ara today

BSS, Dhaka

Qulkhwani of Begum Rawshan Ara Zobaida Khanam, wife of Justice TH Khan, a former minister and senior lawyer of Bangladesh Supreme Court, will be held at Kisholoy Girls High School at Tajmahal Road of Mohamadpur in the city after Asr prayers today.

Relatives, friends and well-wishers of the deceased have been requested to attend the Qulkhwani and pray for the eternal peace of the departed soul.

Rawshan Ara, mother of Afzal H Khan, a former MP and ex-news editor of The Daily Star, passed away due to old-age complications at the age of 80 on May 17.

Teacher among 2 electrocuted

METRO DESK

Two people, including a school teacher, were electrocuted in Mymensingh and Dinajpur yesterday.

Our Correspondent from Mymensingh adds: A school teacher was electrocuted at Dhubaura upazila headquarters yesterday morning.

Aminul Islam, Jewel, 35, of Bowla village in Phulpur upazila, was a physical teacher of Dhubaura Bahumukhi High School.

Police said Aminul was electrocuted as he came in touch with an electric wire when he was setting TV antenna around 9:00am. He died on the spot.

Our Correspondent from Dinajpur says: A middle-aged man was electrocuted after he climbed up a mango tree for plucking mangos in Phultola village in the town yesterday noon.

The deceased was identified as Main Uddin 50, son of late Tahir Uddin of village Phultola in Sadar upazila.

Witnesses said Main Uddin climbed up a mango tree in front of Dinajpur Shishu Park at noon. As an electric wire of PDB passed through the tree he suddenly came contacted with the wire. He died instantly.

Fire Brigade men rushed to the spot and brought down the body.

Section 144 imposed

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Kurigram.

Local administration imposed section 144 on Rajarhat Vocational and Commerce College premises and its surrounding areas for 12 hours as two rival groups of local BNP called separate meetings yesterday at the same time and same venue.

Police said Rajarhat upazila Sechchhasebak Dal called their biannual council meeting on the college premises at 3:00pm while Rajarhat Chhatra Dal called workers' meeting at the same venue at same time.

Later, Upazila Executive Magistrate and UNO Md Rahenul Islam imposed the ban from 12:01pm to 11:59pm to avoid any untoward incident.

Road crashes kill 5, injure 4

METRO DESK

Five people were killed and four others injured in Mymensingh, Pabna, Chittagong and Barisal on Thursday and yesterday.

Our Mymensingh correspondent reports: At least two people including a woman were killed in two separate road accidents in Bhaluka yesterday.

One of the deceased are Muklesur Rahman, 35, of village Nishinda in Bhaluka and the identity of the woman could not be known immediately.

Police said Muklesur was killed when a Dhaka-bound bus from Mymensingh ran over him on Dhaka-Mymensingh highway at Nishinda.

In another accident, the unidentified woman aged about 55 was killed as a Dhaka-bound bus crushed her while she was crossing Dhaka-Mymensingh high-

way at Masterbari in Bhaluka.

Our Pabna correspondent says: An elderly man was killed when a speedy bus hit his motorcycle on Dhaka-Pabna highway at Rajapur village in Sadar upazila on Thursday evening.

The deceased is identified as Easin Ali, 60, of village Rajapur.

BSS from Chittagong adds: A man was killed and four others were injured as a Chittagong-bound auto-rickshaw collided head-on with a covered van at Maizyartek of Karnaphuli yesterday.

The deceased was identified as Javed Hossain, 25, an auto-rickshaw driver.

Our Barisal correspondent says: An elderly woman was killed when a battery-run auto-rickshaw hit her at Sadar upazila yesterday morning.

The deceased was identified as Anita Saha, 75, a widow of Ajit Saha, a renowned businessman in the town.

Gas compressors in limbo

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which is pursuing a host of gas sector deals with Russia, sought two compressors from Russia, specifically for Ashuganj and Elenga. This implies that the on-going tender would have to be shelved, and therefore, the possibility of having these compressors would become bleak.

Additionally, this would create a conflict with the ADB, which is unaware of the government's plans to shelve the on-going tender at its matured stage, officials said.

But prime minister's energy adviser Tawfiq Elahi Chowdhury told The Daily Star on two occasions that the government sought the two compressors from Russia not to cancel the on-going GTCL tender, but to further reinforce the gas transmission system. The country needed more compressors to boost gas supplies especially in the southwestern region, he said.

Tawfiq said he was supervising the compressor project as irregularities in the past had marred two tender processes.

But this is happening once again.

On Monday, Petrobangla and the GTCL took a visiting Russian technical team to Ashuganj-Elenga compressorsites.

About this, Petrobangla Chairman Hussain Monsur told The Daily Star, "A nine-member Russian team consisting of five experts dealing with compressors have visited Ashuganj-Elenga sites."

Asked if the Ashuganj-Elenga compressors would be installed by Russia instead of an open tender winner, he said, "This is a government decision which has not been taken as yet. This (the Russian deal) has not gone up to that level."

But he indicated that the

on-going tender might be scrapped by saying, "If their (Russian) proposal is financially competitive, they will get the job."

When pointed out that Tawfiq had said at a press conference the Russian compressors would be installed in the southwestern region, Hussain Monsur said the ADB-funded tender had not been cancelled and "We need more compressors, that's why we have sought Russian help."

He did not explain why the Russian team did not visit the southwestern region, if that was what the government wanted. But he again said, "The ongoing tender has not been suspended. This is being delayed due to technical issues."

The Petrobangla chairman added, "In fact, the tender recommendations will be placed at the next board meeting."

He pointed out that Russian state company Gazprom was a leading compressor manufacturer. It had installed 572 compressors in Europe. "They have compressors ready to be installed by September-October 2012," he said.

In contrast, US company Chevron, which is installing a compressor in Muchai, is taking nearly three years to complete the job. Chevron had a compressor ready for installation when it was awarded the job in early 2009.

If the two countries agree, Russia will install the two compressors against a loan for Bangladesh. The type of loan could be soft or hard. That has not been decided as yet. Officials say fixing a loan term itself can take many months, and this matter could not be trivialised in projecting how fast a project could be implemented.

An official pointed out that a Bangladeshi team of

experts recently visited Russia to see compressor stations and some gas fields. But they were not taken to any compressor stations on security grounds.

Petrobangla believes that a deal with Russia could bring the compressors faster than the ADB-funded tender process. But some officials brush aside such high hopes. They say the government could not complete the nuclear power deal with Russia in the last two years, and there is no instance where Petrobangla or any government agencies could demonstrate it was possible to strike a deal in the shortest possible time.

Gazprom has been negotiating with the government over a wide array of energy sector cooperation. This includes fast track drilling of gas wells in Titas, Rashidpur, Semutang, Begumganj, Shahbazpur and Sundalpur. Gazprom will also enter into joint venture with Bapex and help Bangladesh build its capacity. In addition, the company has been requested to install two gas compressors.

The compressors are vital for improving the country's gas transmission flow and pressure.

A Petrobangla source involved in the negotiations with the Russians said Petrobangla was doing this hoping that getting the Russian compressors under a government-to-government deal would save a lot of time.

The first tender was cancelled by the ADB in 2006 when it smelt foul play in the GTCL tender process. Back then, the ADB investigated the process, and based on its findings, it blacklisted a foreign compressor manufacturing company from future participation in ADB-funded projects.

Mamata sworn in as W Bengal CM

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in Bengali. Asked how she was feeling after becoming the chief minister, Mamata quipped, "Yes I am a chief minister. I would better prefer to be called a commoner."

Among the ministers are former secretary general of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry Amit Mitra, party leader Partha Chatterjee, former state home secretary Manish Gupta, TV actor Bratya Basu, former Congress leader Subrata Mukherjee, former Central Bureau of Investigation official Upen Biswas, former Indian Police Service officer Rachpal Singh, former Maoist Purnendu Basu and former Calcutta High Court judge Shankar Chowdhury.

Although huge women electorates had voted for Mamata's party, the cabinet has got only a second woman in the form of Sabitri Mitra.

Hiten Burman from Cooch Behar and Gautam Deb from Siliguri were also inducted into the cabinet. Both of them won from North Bengal, where Trinamool extended its footprint in recent assembly elections.

The cabinet's Muslim

ministers include Abdul Karim Chowdhury from North Dinajpur, a traditional base of Congress. He joined Trinamool deserting Congress. Congress is represented in the cabinet by Manas Bhuiyan and Abu Hena.

The swearing-in ceremony took place in the presence of 3200 invitees drawn from top names in politics, business, art and culture.

Indian Finance Minister Pranab Mukherjee, Home Minister P Chidambaram, former West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee and his party colleagues Biman Bose and Asim Dasgupta, film actors Prasenjit, Ranjit Mallick, June Malia, veteran singer Sandhya Mukherjee, leading sports personalities Chuni Goswami and P K Banerjee, among others, were present at the ceremony that lasted for about 90 minutes.

The new CM spent an hour in a meeting with the governor at the Raj Bhavan.

Later she walked about half a kilometre to the Writers' Building, West Bengal's state secretariat. She was accompanied by her cabinet colleagues, thousands of partymen and com-

moners.

Police had a tough time in checking the surging crowd of thousands who assembled on both sides of the Council House Street.

Earlier, before leaving her modest tile-roofed house at Kalighat in south Kolkata for the Raj Bhavan, Mamata promised to work hard to learn about running the administration.

"I will work day and night at least for the next seven days without taking any off on Saturday or Sunday," noted the Trinamool supremo.

She also vowed to ensure transparency in the administration and make efforts to solve people's problems.

Mamata's motorcade wound its way through some of the busiest streets to the Raj Bhavan. Thousands of people, waving green Trinamool Congress flags, lined up on both sides of the streets greeted her with lusty cheers.

Trinamool and its allies had stormed to the state's power with three-fourths majority in the 294-seat state legislative assembly.

JOINT TAGORE DEATH ANNIVERSARY

In one of her first major

Contribution of Aksharananda recalled

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Speakers at a memorial meeting yesterday said Swami Aksharananda could be an idol of secular Bangladesh as his lifestyle and philosophy could play a vital role in establishing a secular Bangladesh.

Vivekananda Shiksha O Sangskriti Parishad Bangladesh organised the programme at Jatiya Press Club in the city.

Prof Kazi Nurul Islam chairperson of Department of World Religion and Culture of Dhaka University, said it is possible to establish secularism by showing respect and love to other religions. Aksharananda, principal of Ramkrishna Temple, can be an example to both Hindus and Muslims, he added.

The Daily Sun Editor Prof Syed Anwar Hussain termed Aksharananda as a beacon for humanity. Prof Aminul Islam said Aksharananda worked with those general people whom Swami Vivekananda had mentioned.

Vivekananda Parishad President Prof Sitesh Chandra Bachar presided over the meeting, says a press release.

Prof Ajoy Kumar Das, Prof ANM Rois Uddin, Prof Sukomal Barua, Prof Revarend Father Benjamin Di Costa and Ramkrishna Mission Assistant Secretary Shrirattanondoji Moharaj also spoke.

10 Myanmar citizens held

BSS, Rangamati

Police arrested ten citizens of Myanmar from Lama upazila of the district in separate raids on Thursday.

They were living in different places in Lama for a long time, police said.

BNP's long march likely next month

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country's constitution and demanding a "midterm election", said party leaders.

She will address people at important places on the way. The party will take immediate disciplinary action if any district or upazila committee fails to organise people during the demonstration.

The main opposition considered three routes-- Dhaka to Chittagong, Dhaka to Sylhet and Dhaka to North Bengal. The party's national standing committee will finally decide on one route for the programme, said party insiders.

A group of senior and mid-level leaders are working on the plan. They are trying to

determine the route in consultation with the units of the districts that come under the proposed routes.

Talking to The Daily Star, a member of the standing committee said the issue had already been discussed in a committee meeting and the party leader agreed on the proposal.

He said party policymakers had agreed to organise the long march towards Sylhet in protest at India's move to build a Tipaimukh dam.

"But now the focus has been changed. Many new issues like the cancellation of caretaker government system have come to the forefront of people's attention."

So, the party will stage the demonstration to organise people against caretaker government cancellation, said the standing committee member.

Another standing committee member Lt Gen (ret'd) Mahbubur Rahman said, "Tougher programmes including long march will be taken after the chairperson's return and death anniversary of late president Ziaur Rahman."

The party has already chalked out a nine-day programme to observe the death anniversary of Ziaur Rahman, founder of the party, on May 30 with due solemnity.

3 murdered

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30 years could not be known. Uttam Kumar Pathak, assistant superintendent of police of Tangail Model Police Station, said police recovered the body of farmer Mofiz from a paddy field in his village and the body of the unidentified woman hanging from a tree at an abandoned house in Gharinda.

Officer-in-Charge of Bhupur Police Station Ismail Hossain said Karim, a sawmill worker, was found severely hacked at Nikrail Bazar Thursday night. He died at Tangail General Hospital yesterday morning.

Police sent all the bodies to Tangail General Hospital morgue for autopsies yesterday morning.